



# SC FreshXpress

*a publication of the*

**SC Fruit, Vegetable, & Specialty Crop Association**

**July 2008**

## **SC Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association**

### **Purpose**

The SC Fruit, Vegetable, and Specialty Crop Association (SCFVSCA) supports promotional, research, and educational efforts for improving the marketing and quality of production of fresh fruit, vegetable, and specialty crops grown in South Carolina. The Association works with any and all grower groups, government agencies, public universities, elected officials, and other public and private organizations or businesses to promote the best interest of fresh fruit, vegetable and specialty crops in South Carolina from production to consumption.

### **Committees at work**

#### ***Research Committee***

Dickie Kirby of Timmonsville who is serving as chairman of the Research Committee and Powell Smith as the Advisor to the group have been meeting to develop the guidelines for collecting information about potential projects. For more information, call Dickie at 843-346-3931.

#### ***Expo Auction Committee***

Russell Duncan and Bruce Johnson are working on items to be auctioned off at the 2008 EXPO as a part of organization's fund raising efforts. For additional information please call Russell at 803-435-8429; Ext. 111 and Bruce at 843-365-6715.

## **Another South Carolina Summer . . .**

*by Stephen Still, President*

It is already hot and dry over much of the state as we begin our summer harvest season. Strawberries sure were "good eating" this spring, and I hope our members who grow strawberries had a successful season.

If the recent weather is any indication, we will be battling hot and dry weather again this summer. Most of our crops are irrigated, but a little help from Mother Nature would be nice. She has provided some scattered rain, and unfortunately some hail, across the state this season that has impacted some growing regions, but everything seems to be moving forward at this point.

Interest in local products continues to grow at a rapid pace with consumers. Everywhere you look you see retailers taking advantage of this trend. I encourage our members to get involved with the Certified SC Grown program and to take advantage of the marketing tools that are available. Whether you are a large commercial grower or a smaller producer growing for community based markets and farmers markets, Certified South Carolina can help you reach local consumers.

Ansley Rast coordinates the Certified SC Grown program. She can be reached at (803)734-2200 in Columbia. Call her and join today if you are not already a member.

As we head into the major harvest season, I wish you all the best. Farming is always an uncertain venture and requires us to stop and take stock of the seasonal outlook as it changes each year. I hope that when all is said and done in 2008 that the year will be a good one for agriculture in South Carolina.

# Annual Southeast Fruit & Vegetable EXPO

*Save the date! December 2-3, 2008*

The SC Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Association Board of Directors has voted to continue supporting the North Carolina Vegetable Growers in hosting the 2008 Southeast Fruit and Vegetable Expo on December 2 - 3, 2008.

The two-day Expo at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center will be filled with fun, and information about the latest trends in production, harvesting, post harvest handling, and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables in the two Carolinas.

Members are urged to join with your fellow farmers from both North and South Carolina to talk shop and see what is working for other farmers. The educational sessions will include researchers sharing information about the latest research that is being carried out across the Southeastern region of the country. There will also be educational sessions led by farmers sharing information about what works for them. The Exhibit Hall in the Convention Center will be filled with some of the latest harvesting and packaging equipment and trends for production, so you can talk directly with manufacturer's representatives.

Save this date and join your fellow farmers at the 2008 Southeast Fruit and Vegetable Expo.

## Certified SC Grown

The SCFV&SC Association Board voted to join with commodity boards and other associations to support the CertifiedSCGrown Branding and Marketing Program by contributing toward the buy local campaign.

The Certified SC Grown Branding and Marketing Program is doing what it was intended to do - raise the awareness level of South Carolina grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

Since the first of the year, Fred Broughton has had the opportunity to visit with a large number of farmers in South Carolina. He says there is a common thread that the farmers are talking about and that is the Certified SC Grown Branding and Promotional Campaign.

Many farmers are seeing increases in their sales of fresh fruits and vegetables because the public is asking where their food comes from and they are demanding locally grown produce.

The SCFV&SC's support of this effort will benefit each member individually and the association collectively.



## Membership Renewal

**A friendly reminder  
has been sent to the  
members who have  
not paid the 2008  
membership dues.**

**Please respond by  
July 31, 2008  
to Fred Broughton,  
803-734-2224  
fbrough@scda.sc.gov.**

## Society of Saint Andrew Looking for Fields to Glean

The Society of Saint Andrew is asking permission from farmers in South Carolina to glean their fields after they the farmers have decided that it is uneconomical for them to continue harvesting the fruits, vegetables and potatoes, etc.

This may be an opportunity to help farmers manage their tax liabilities.

If you need additional information about the gleaning program, you may contact Debbie Riley, the Society of Saint Andrew South Carolina, 803-568-2739 (home) or 803-629-673-6783 (cell) or call Fred Broughton, SC Department of Agriculture, 803-734-2224.

## Grower Salute to Clyde Gurosik

Clyde Gurosik, a long time member who operates Berry Plantation, Inc, in N. Augusta, SC, saw a new marketing opportunity to promote South Carolina grown strawberries to future buyers.

Clyde worked out an agreement with the Food Service Director for Aiken County School System to serve fresh locally grown strawberries in each school cafeteria.

We salute Clyde for his efforts to get fresh, locally grown fruits in all schools in Aiken County in April. We also encourage farmers in other counties to communicate with their local school Food Service Director about doing something similar in their county.

## ***SCDA Update***

### **Attention Growers, Packers, & Wholesalers! *Get Your \$400.00 Rebate!!!***

As you are aware food safety is on the minds of everyone receiving your fresh grown produce. The South Carolina Department of Agriculture wants to help you be assured that products are safe.

Many of you have already been required or soon will be required to go through a Good Agricultural Practice and Good Handling Practice Food Safety Audit to sell your produce to the large wholesale company because they want to be sure you are following safe practices.

Whether you are a grower, packer, or wholesaler we at the SC Department of Agriculture, through our Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service, can offer you this service with a USDA Audit that can follow your product from the field, through a packing house, and to the wholesale level. Not only can we perform the audit we can also offer you a \$400.00 rebate toward the fee to get it done as well. However, this only applies to you doing the USDA Audit.

In 1998, USDA and the US Food and Drug Administration jointly issued a guidance document for the fresh fruit and vegetable industry that provided general guidelines for reducing the possibility of contamination of fresh produce by microbial organisms. In cooperation with state partners as result of request from customers, primarily shippers and growers, this independent third party audit based service is provided.

For more information about the audit and the \$400.00 rebate you can contact Jack Dantzler, Director of Inspection and Grading at 803-737-4597.

### **Market News gets a new look (*and sound*)!**

Market News got a facelift with the recent launching of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture's new web site. Now reports are easier than ever to find. Follow the link at [www.agriculture.sc.gov](http://www.agriculture.sc.gov) to the Market News section.

Each area of Market News - Fruit & Vegetable, Livestock and Grain - has direct links to frequently used reports including the daily shed report, terminal report, daily livestock auction reports and the daily grain report.

Market News also now features online audio recordings. Updated daily, each recording reports the latest futures prices for various commodities and offers a brief synopsis of the previous day's market conditions and prices.

In addition, a list of SC grown produce available at the Columbia State Farmers Market is featured as well as the weekly newsletter and links to other useful web sites including the American Marketing Service and Chicago Board of Trade. Check out this new, interactive site at [www.agriculture.sc.gov](http://www.agriculture.sc.gov).

Also, all the audio recordings can be heard via telephone by dialing 803-737-2900. For more information about the Market News Service, call Jack Dantzler, Director of Inspection and Grading and Market News, 803-737-4597.

### **Merchandiser Targets SC Stores**

To follow through on getting South Carolina produce and products with the Certified SC brand on the shelves in the major food stores, the Department has hired a merchandiser to work at the store level with the buyers to get your products on the shelves and in the bins. The signs and shelf danglers showing the Certified SC Grown logo are now appearing in the stores all around the state.

## **Marketing Opportunities**

### **Neighbor helping Neighbor**

Direct marketing provides additional opportunities for many of the smaller farmers who do not have on farm storage and cooling facilities. The smaller farmer who needs to buy fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement his or her line of produce should contact his neighboring farmer to get fresh locally grown produce for his offerings. Neighbors helping neighbors is what this business is about.

### **Community-Based Farmers Markets**

More than 70 community based farmers markets are operating in South Carolina and all of them are constantly recruiting additional farmers. The demand for locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables is creating marketing opportunities for many small farmers while it makes locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables available to local citizens.



## **Forcing Strawberries for the Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year's Holiday Season: *Is This Possible?***

by Robert J. Dufault and Brian Ward, Clemson University Coastal REC, Charleston, SC

Why bother? In the U.S. from November through February, there is a lucrative market for strawberries since domestic supply is low and demand is high. During this time, unit price for strawberries is at its highest point during the year. Sometimes winter strawberries can retail for \$5 to \$6/pint versus \$2 - \$3/pint during spring. Strawberries can be "forced" into production in high tunnels during the fall and winter but usually, yields are lower than traditional spring production. Since the unit value of the forced strawberries is much higher in winter, lower yields are offset somewhat by better prices. For a number of years now, we have attempted to increase forced yields and earliness in high tunnels to increase greater profitability and to hit the markets at the right time, especially the Thanksgiving holiday season.

How do you actually force strawberries? What are the special cultural practices? We installed a high tunnel (96 feet long x 14 feet wide x 7 feet tall) for our strawberry work at the Coastal Research Center in Charleston. (See photo.)

For more information on the special cultural practices of forcing strawberries, contact Robert J. Dufault, [bdflt@clemson.edu](mailto:bdflt@clemson.edu), or Brian Ward, [bw@clemson.edu](mailto:bw@clemson.edu), or call 843-402-5399.



## **Methyl Bromide Alternatives**

Powell Smith, Clemson Extension Associate, Lexington, SC

As many of you know, methyl bromide is being phased out as a soil fumigant due to its effect on the ozone layer. The process began in the late 1990's with an annual reduction in production and allowed use. Since there have been no really effective alternatives developed to manage nut sedges, production and use of methyl bromide has been allowed under a process called Critical Use Exemptions (CUE), which are resubmitted each year. We are currently working on the 2009 CUE. In spite of the CUE process, the end of use of methyl bromide is in sight.

Several alternatives have been researched but they all have flaws due to timeliness of plant back, equipment needs, costs, etc. Many new methods involve the use of virtually impermeable film (VIF), a type of plastic mulch, which doesn't allow as much gas to pass through the film. This allows the use of lower rates to achieve the same level of effectiveness. It is effective for all fumigants, but the level of impermeability varies for each fumigant. This has allowed us to extend the amount of to greater are due to ability to reduce the rates under this type of film. Methyl iodide (registered under the name of Midas®) is somewhat of a drop in replacement for methyl bromide, but it is very costly at this time. It has also been shown to be effective at lower rates under VIF. Stanley Culpepper, at the University of Georgia, has developed a system in use in Georgia involving Telone®, chloropicrin, and metam sodium covered with mulch film. Other alternatives being investigated are various combinations of metam sodium or potassium, Telone® products, chloropicrin, dimethyl disulfide, and several herbicides under mulch film. Frank Louws, at NCSU, has several years of research showing that Controlled Microbial Compost (CMC) under plastic mulch film can give yields approaching those of chemical fumigants (methyl bromide included) if nut sedges are not a problem.

Four South Carolina agents as well agents from surrounding southern states recently attended in-service training about methyl bromide alternatives in Tifton, GA using funds from the Area Wide Methyl Bromide Alternatives Project headed-up by USDA. Also, there are two demonstrations of alternative chemical fumigants and VIF in Lexington County involving strawberry and pepper. More demonstrations in South Carolina under the Area Wide Methyl Bromide Alternatives Project are planned for the fall and next spring season. For more information please contact Powell Smith at the Lexington County Clemson Extension office.

## **'Cahaba White' Vetch, Biological Control, and Telone C-35 Fumigation to Reduce Fusarium Wilt of Seedless Watermelon**

by Anthony Keinath, Plant Pathology, & Richard Hassell, Horticulture  
Clemson University Coastal REC, Charleston, SC

Cover cropping with hairy vetch has been used successfully to suppress Fusarium wilt in more than 10 trials in Maryland during the past 5 years. Another vetch, 'Cahaba White' hybrid common vetch, may be better suited to South Carolina. This question is being addressed in field plots at the Coastal Research and Education Center, Charleston, SC; Lower Eastern Shore Research and Extension Center, Salisbury, MD; and in on-farm plots near Fairfax, SC. The experiments were done in 2007 and are being repeated in 2008.

'Cahaba White' hybrid vetch and rye were seeded October 10, 2007 in large plots. Rye was used as a control treatment that has no effect on Fusarium wilt. Cover crops were disked March 3 and 14, 2008. Telone C-35 was applied to half of the rye plots on April 11. Within each cover crop treatment, some transplants were treated with the biocontrol fungus CS20, while others received no biocontrol treatment (control). The number of wilted plants will be counted until harvest and number and weight of marketable melons will be measured.

This study is funded by the USDA Pest Management Alternatives Program, USDA Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, the South Carolina Watermelon Board, and USDA/CSREES Project SC-1700294.

## **Sentinel Plots for Cucurbit Downy Mildew**

by Anthony Keinath, Plant Pathology, Coastal REC, Clemson University

Sentinel plots of seven cucurbits were planted in four locations in South Carolina and 82 locations in the United States and Ontario, Canada, to monitor spread of cucurbit downy mildew. In South Carolina, plots are located in Charleston, Gilbert (Lexington County), Gable (Sumter County), and York. As of May 30, no downy mildew has been found outside of Florida yet.

No.	Species	Cultivar name	Common name
1	<i>Cucumis sativus</i>	Straight Eight	Slicing cucumber
2	<i>Cucumis sativus</i>	Poinsett 76	Slicing cucumber
3	<i>Cucumis melo</i>	Hales Best Jumbo	Cantaloupe
4	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	Table Queen	Acorn squash
5	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	Big Max	Giant pumpkin
6	<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>	Waltham Butternut	Butternut squash
7	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Micky Lee	Watermelon

*Funding provided by the USDA ipmPIPE program through North Carolina State University*

## **Promotions that Sell display contest for Farmers Market Vendors**

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture is sponsoring a statewide contest, *Promotions that Sell*, to recognize effective display techniques at farmers markets around the state. The displays, featuring the Certified SC Grown branding campaign, must highlight South Carolina agriculture products as presented at the market on a regular market day. The South Carolina Department of Agriculture Marketing Division will offer cash prizes for farmers market vendors who go the extra mile to use display techniques that feature their product at its best. To encourage all to participate, the state has been divided into three regions with three cash prizes in EACH region.

The contest is open to all farmers market vendors selling South Carolina products who are Certified SC Grown members. To participate, the logo should be featured prominently in the display. If you are not presently a member of Certified SC Grown, you may download an application at [www.agriculture.sc.gov](http://www.agriculture.sc.gov) or [www.CertifiedSCgrown.com](http://www.CertifiedSCgrown.com) or call Fred Broughton, 803-734-2224, for an application. Participation is free. Open to all vendors of farmers markets registered in the Certified SC program. Cash prizes to three lucky vendors in each of three regions of the state.

**1st Place - \$300**

**2nd Place - \$200**

**3rd Place - \$100**

**Buy South Carolina. Nothing's fresher. Nothing's finer.**

SC Fruit, Vegetable, & Specialty Crop Association  
% SC Department of Agriculture  
PO Box 11280  
Columbia, SC 29211

## SC FV & SC Association Board of Directors

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Dorchester, Hampton and Jasper Counties.

## *Membership Renewal Reminder!* *July 31, 2008*

Three reasons to renew your membership to the SC  
Fruit, Vegetable & Specialty Crop Association . . .

1. The Association works with the SC Department of  
Agriculture to identify marketing opportunities  
for all farmers that grow produce in SC.
2. The Association works with researchers to identi-  
fy and prioritize research that is needed on  
production and harvesting of produce in SC.
3. The Association cooperates with other agricultur-  
al associations and organizations in SC to make a  
financial commitment to promote Certified SC  
Grown on your behalf.

Complete the membership application and mail it  
with a check payable SC-FV&SC Association to the  
address on the form by July 31, 2008.

If you did not receive a membership form by mail,  
contact Fred Broughton, 803-734-2200,  
fbrough@scda.sc.gov.